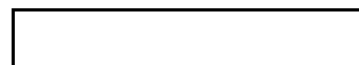


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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum

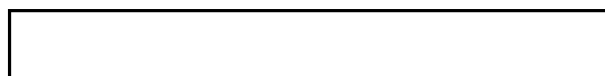


THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
7 September 1966

State Department
review completed

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
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HIGHLIGHTS

The majority of reports from South Vietnam on the forthcoming election indicate that disruptive tactics will not have a significant effect on the expected voter turnout. Nevertheless, a number of terrorist incidents keyed to the election have been reported and this activity may take its toll in areas such as Hue.

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Viet Cong guerrillas struck at two South Vietnamese military outposts on the edge of Saigon late today (Para. 1). Two allied operations--PAWNEE and TOLEDO--ended today with only light contact with enemy forces reported (Paras. 3-4). A Viet Cong training course has been established to teach city fighting tactics (Para. 5). Market Time operations report for the month of August (Paras. 6-7).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Several persons have been wounded as a result of Viet Cong efforts to disrupt the Sunday elections. However, most provinces report that they do not expect the number of voters to be significantly affected (Paras. 1-3).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. Communist Political Developments: Hanoi has attacked President Johnson's 5 September statement on a fixed withdrawal schedule for US troops (Paras. 1-2).

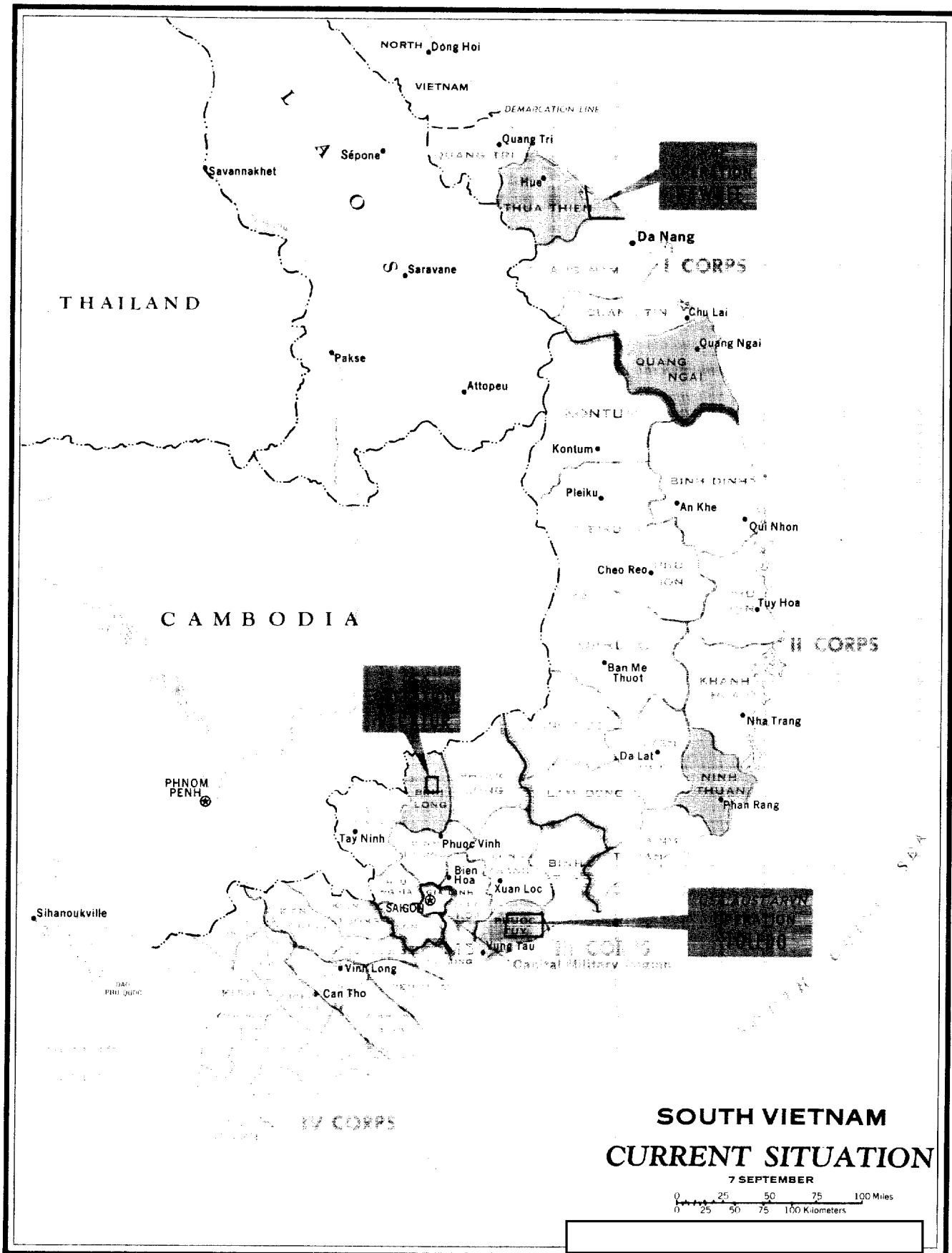
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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Viet Cong guerrillas staged two separate attacks on South Vietnamese military units on the outskirts of Saigon late on 7 September, according to press reports. One Communist platoon struck an outpost three miles northeast of the city. About an hour later, the Viet Cong attacked a Vietnamese Marine outpost three miles west of the city with 15 mortar shells. US armed helicopters helped beat off the raiders. There were no reports of casualties in either attack.

2. A one-battalion security operation named DECATUR has been initiated in Binh Long Province in an area about 60 miles north of Saigon.

3. Operation PAWNEE, conducted by one US Marine battalion 20 miles northwest of Da Nang in Thua Thien Province, ended today. A total of nine Communist troops were killed and six captured in this operation which began on 25 August. Eleven US Marines were wounded. Eight tactical air strikes were flown in support of PAWNEE.

4. Operation TOLEDO, conducted by four allied battalions in Phuoc Tuy Province, also ended today. This search-and-destroy operation which began on 9 August resulted in only 11 Communist troops killed and ten captured. Friendly casualties included eight killed (six US) and 43 wounded (35 US).

Establishment of a Viet Cong Training Course

5. The Viet Cong have established a training course designed to teach the tactics of city fighting [redacted] The 15-day course is scheduled to begin in early September. The training site is equipped with a model of portions of Saigon, including streets and buildings.

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Market Time Operations for August

6. US Navy forces participating in Market Time operations last month detected 124,339 junks and 1,535 merchant ships. Of these, 34,135 junks and 819 merchant ships were inspected from alongside, and 23,578 junks and 124 merchant ships were inspected by boarding. A total of 135 junks and 970 persons were detained. Twenty-six junks and 1,042 persons were detained by the South Vietnamese Navy.

7. Most of the detained junks were found off the coast between Quang Ngai and Ninh Thuan provinces. No major sea infiltration attempts were detected during the month.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. One of the latest Viet Cong - initiated incidents keyed to next Sunday's national elections occurred on 6 September in Saigon when a mine was exploded outside the home of one of the candidates. The VC also sent the candidate a note ordering him to withdraw from the election, according to press reports. The most serious incident, however, took place in Hue on Tuesday evening when a Viet Cong youth threw a grenade into a crowd at a police station where a meeting was being held to discuss election procedures. Twenty-six persons were wounded in this attack. The terrorist was subsequently apprehended.

2. An official US Embassy report has indicated that antielection activity in Hue is taking its toll in spite of attempts by the security services there to guard key installations and to protect the candidates. Several government functionaries have reportedly asked the province chief to be relieved of their duties of governing the polling sites. Vietnamese security services also have indicated that possibly 20 percent of the Hue votes might be illegal. This presumably refers to earlier reports that voters have been exhorted by Buddhist leaders and the Viet Cong to invalidate their ballots.

3. Other antielection incidents, as reported by the press, have included the wounding of five persons at an election rally in Cholon and the destruction of a hamlet administration headquarters only five miles from Saigon. However, most reports from the provinces indicate that disruptive tactics will not have a significant effect on the expected voter turnout.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Hanoi has attacked President Johnson's 5 September statement that the US will fix a schedule for withdrawal of its troops from South Vietnam as soon as Hanoi makes known its own schedule for the withdrawal of its troops from South Vietnam. Hanoi radio on 6 September broadcast a "commentary" asserting that the only foreign armed forces in South Vietnam are those of the US and its "satellites," and therefore there can only be the question of the withdrawal of these armed forces. The Hanoi statement asserted flatly that "there can be no question of the withdrawal of the armed forces on both sides."

2. The Hanoi radio commentary closed with the usual pledge to continue fighting as long as "the aggressors do not agree to recognize the Vietnamese people's stand through concrete acts." The Hanoi response did not bother to deny that North Vietnamese are in South Vietnam, but insisted that the war is between the US "aggressor" and the "Vietnamese people."

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